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Freedom and the  
Old South Meeting-house  
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Old South Leaflets.  
General Series. V. 9. No. 202.

## Freedom and the Old South Meeting-house.

So long as Boston shall Boston be,  
And her bay-tides rise and fall,  
Shall freedom stand in the Old South Church  
And plead for the rights of all.

—Whittier.

### IN THE BEGINNING.

The church now called the Old South Church in Boston, was the third Congregational church gathered in this town.<sup>1</sup> Like too many other churches of Christ, it originated in bitter contentions. . . . The contentions . . . were not local, or of sudden production; but originated in the first ecclesiastical institutions of the country, and were spread through the whole of New England.

Our Puritan ancestors were, as a body, men of rare excellencies. . . . In their views of civil and religious liberty, they were far in advance of their age. But they had not discovered that radical principle of free institutions, the separation of church and state. . . . "An order," made in 1631, . . . ["that . . . no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this Commonwealth, but such as are members of some of the Churches, . . ."]<sup>2</sup> occasioned discontent from the beginning. . . . [The] number of persons not church members who were, of course, excluded from all civil offices, and from having any voice in elections, and yet were subject to taxation and the various burdens of public service . . . gradually increased. . . . They soon began to complain of their unjust burdens and restrictions. . . . At length, in 1646, the subjects of these restrictions, throughout the colony, made a vigorous effort to obtain relief. . . . In 1662, . . .

<sup>1</sup> This extract and the one following—on the "Conflict with Andros"—are both reprinted from "The History of the Old South Church in Boston, in Four Sermons, . . ." by Benjamin B. Wisner, Pastor of the church [1821-1832], Boston, 1830, Sermon I.

<sup>2</sup> Colonial Laws, Mass., 1649, p. 33, reprinted in Whitmore ed., Boston, 1889, p. 153.

a Synod of all the ministers . . . [determined], in substance, that all baptized persons ought to be considered members of the church, under its discipline, and to be admitted to all its privileges, except a participation of the communion. . . . The decision appeared . . . rather to inflame the churches. . . . There were great divisions and contentions in *the church of Boston* upon this head.<sup>1</sup> . . . [The Rev. John Wilson, the pastor, having died in 1667, the proposal] to extend a call to John Davenport of New Haven, . . . "the-greatest of the anti-synodists," met with a warm opposition. To settle Mr. Davenport, it was urged, would be virtually to declare against the decisions of the Synod. . . . All objections were, however, overruled by the majority; and Mr. Davenport was installed pastor over the Boston church. The dissatisfied brethren, . . . in all twenty-nine, including some of the most respectable persons in the colony<sup>2</sup> . . . now . . . organized themselves into a distinct church, under the denomination of "the Third Church in Boston," . . . May 12th, 1669 [O.S.].<sup>3</sup> . . . And a flame was kindled which spread through the colony. [After a time] . . . the new church, and its friends through the colony, achieved a public and final

<sup>1</sup> The First Church did not accept the more liberal covenant until March 3, 1731.

<sup>2</sup> Among them were John Hull, mint-master and treasurer of the colony; Hezekiah Usher, agent of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians; Edward Raynsford who had come over with Winthrop and was brother to a Lord Chief Justice; Jacob Eliot, a nephew of "Apostle" John Eliot; Edward Rawson, secretary of the colony from 1650 to 1686; Thomas Savage, son-in-law of Anne Hutchinson; Peter Oliver and Thomas Brattle, founders of large fortunes in trade; John Alden, son of John Alden and Priscilla of Plymouth; and others of note. Thomas Thacher was the first pastor, 1670 to 1678.

<sup>3</sup> The First Church in Boston, variously described as "Boston Church," "Church of Boston," and "The Old Church," was organized by the colonists under Winthrop, in the year of settlement, 1630. From 1632 to 1640 meetings both of the church and of the town were held in a small thatched-roof building on the south side of what is now State street, diagonally across from the market-place on the site of which the Old State House now stands. In 1640 a wooden meeting-house was put up on the west side of "the Corn-hill" (the old name for that part of Washington Street) but still near the public market in order that trade might not be diverted from the vicinity. This second meeting-house was burnt in the fire of 1711, and the brick structure which was promptly raised in its place came to be known as "The Old Brick." In 1808, however, the latter was taken down and the land sold for other purposes. The office building now on the site is set apart on three sides by a court (now Cornhill court and Court avenue) which in the days of the meeting-house was named "Church square."

The Second Church was a division from the First Church, supposedly for the convenience of householders at the North End. The North Meeting-house, or "Old North," as it was eventually called, gave the name to North square, and was first occupied in 1650. Samuel, brother of Increase Mather, was the first preacher, and Increase, Cotton, and Samuel Mather, father, son, and grandson, were successively its pastors, from 1664 to 1741. The original building was destroyed by the fire of Nov. 27, 1676, and it was the second meeting-house on the same ground that was pulled down and used for firewood by "evil-minded men of the king's party," during the siege of Boston, 1775-6.

Strictly speaking, the so-called "Third Church" was not the third religious body to be gathered in Boston, the Society of Friends (May 4, 1664) and the First Baptist Church (July 7, 1665) having both organized meetings prior to 1669, but the South Church, at what was then considered the south end of the town, was the third *Congregational* church, as Dr. Wisner says. The Congregational churches, such as the First, Second, and Third Churches in Boston, were the Puritan or "independent" congregations organized in "The New-England Way," and "separated" or "dissenting" from the Established Church in England.



triumph [at the elections]; a triumph . . . to be rejoiced in, as confirming the rights of freemen.<sup>1</sup> to many who had been unjustly deprived of them, and laying the foundation of all the good to be effected, in the hands of providence, by this church.<sup>2</sup>

#### CONFLICT WITH ANDROS.

. . . Political evils . . . soon came upon the colony, in rapid succession and with fearful weight. In 1676, arrived that unrelenting enemy of the liberties of New England, Edward Randolph, "whose business it was," the people said, "to go up and down seeking to devour them." In 1682, he proposed in the Council of the colony, that ministers of the Established Church of England should be sent over; to be maintained, in part, by diverting to this object the money hitherto annually expended amongst the Indians, and to have the exclusive privilege of solemnizing marriages. This proposal spread alarm among the ministers and churches, and produced a deep conviction of the necessity of union and concert in resisting the threatened encroachments upon their liberties. . . .

In July, 1685, the charter of the colony was abrogated.<sup>3</sup> . . . Col. Joseph Dudley received a commission to take charge of the government . . . [and] entered in form upon the duties of

<sup>1</sup> That is, the right to vote, and to be eligible for office.

[In 1634], there was plenty of room for all near Boston, if they had been able to agree on questions of government. But many people thought the clergy were getting too much power, and disapproved the policy of allowing none but church members to vote. These feelings were especially strong in Dorchester, Watertown, and Cambridge (then still called Newtown). The pastor at Cambridge was Thomas Hooker, one of the most learned and eloquent of the Puritan leaders. He believed that the whole people ought to be governed by the whole people, or as nearly as possible. In other words, he believed that all the people ought to take part, directly or indirectly, in the work of governing; that those who do not themselves hold office at least ought to vote. On the other hand, Governor Winthrop believed that a large part of the people are always unfit to take part in governing. He believed that the whole people ought to be governed by a part of the people, supposed to consist of the best and wisest persons. Thus we see that Winthrop's idea of government was aristocratic, while Hooker's idea was democratic. . . . What happened was that, in 1636, a great part of the congregations of Cambridge, Watertown, and Dorchester, journeyed to the Connecticut Valley. (There, in 1639, for the first time in the history of the world a state was created by a written constitution.) In the colony thus founded there was no restriction of suffrage to church members.—John Fiske, "History of the United States for Schools," Boston, 1899, p. 101 *et seq.* Cf. Old South Leaflets, No. 8, "The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut," and No. 55, "The Way of the Churches of New England."

<sup>2</sup> The victory of the seceders, for so we may call it, is a turning-point in the ecclesiastical, and therefore in the political history of New England. It was none the less a gain to the cause of freedom, because, like most such victories, it was won by men who were consciously fighting only for their own privileges.—John A. Doyle, "The English in America. The Puritan Colonies," London, 1887, Vol. 2, p. 251.

The South Church, then, came forth as a protest against exclusiveness, religious and political. At the very beginning it stood for freedom of worship and political equality. It stood directly in line with the early contentions of Thomas Hooker, and in Boston itself.

<sup>3</sup> This was the date the formal notice was received in Massachusetts. The charter was actually vacated the previous year, the decree in Chancery having been entered June 18, and confirmed October 23, 1684. The proceedings, in the form of a writ of *scire facias*, were brought at the instance of the king (Charles II).

his office May 25, 1686. The *next day* a clergyman<sup>1</sup> of the *Church of England* . . . waited on the Council, and requested one of the three Meeting Houses to preach in. This was refused; and he was granted the east end of the Town-house, . . . until those who desired his ministry should provide a fitter house.

On the 19th, of the following December, Sir Edmund Andros arrived, as governor, with almost unlimited powers. He landed on the 20th, and went to the Town-house, where his commission was read, and the Council sworn. The ministers being present at the solemnity, he took them aside into the Library, and spoke to them about accommodation as to a Meeting House, the times of service to be so contrived as that one House might serve two assemblies. The next day a meeting was held of the ministers and four of each church, to determine what answer to give to the Governor; and it was agreed, that they could not, with a good conscience, accede to his Excellency's proposal.

On the 23d, of March, the Governor sent Randolph for the keys of the South Meeting-house. The demand was not complied with; and six of the principal members of the church waited on his Excellency, and remonstrated against his occupying the House without the consent of the proprietors. On the 25th, the Governor sent orders to the sexton to ring the bell and open the House. The sexton was frightened into a compliance; and the Meeting House was occupied for the service for Good-Friday prescribed by the Church of England. On the next Sabbath, the Governor and his retinue again met in the Meeting House, having notified Mr. Willard<sup>2</sup> that he might occupy it at half past one. The members of the South congregation, accordingly, assembled at that time; but were kept standing in the street till past two.<sup>3</sup> From this time the

<sup>1</sup> A Mr. Ratcliffe who had come over with Dudley in 1683. The first Episcopal or Church of England society was formed here in 1685.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Willard, pastor of the South Church, 1678-1707.

<sup>3</sup> Sabbath March 27. Governour and his retinue met in our Meeting house at Eleven; broke off past two because of the Sacrament and Mr. Clark's long Sermon; now we were appointed to come ½ hour past one, so twas a sad Sight to see how full the Street was with people gazing and moving to and fro because had not entrance into the House. . . .

Saturday, June 23. Capt. Frary and I goe to his Excellency at the Secretaries Office, and there desired that He would not alter his time of Meeting, and that Mr. Willard consented to no such thing, neither did he count that 'twas in his power so to doe. Mr. West said he went not to ask Mr. Willard Leave. His Excellency asked who the House belong'd to; we told Him the Title to the House was on Record. His Excellency turned to Mr. Graham and said, Mr. Attorney; we will have that look'd into. Governour said if Mr. Willard not the Parson, so great an Assembly must be considered. We said He was Master of the Assembly, but had no power to dispose of the House, neither had others, for the Deed expressed the Use 't was to be put to. Governour complain'd of our long staying Sabbath-day sennight; said 't was the Lord's Supper, and (he) had promised to go to some other House on such dayes; Mr. Randolph said he knew of no such promise, and the Governour



Governor, when in town, occupied the House, at such times as he was pleased to say suited his convenience, (more than once changing the hours of meetings on the Sabbath, to the great annoyance of Mr. Willard and his people,)—probably till his deposition from the government in 1689: when the congregation were freed from the usurpation.

#### TESTIMONY AGAINST THE WITCHCRAFT DELUSION.

Mr. Willard was regarded as “a champion, defending the cause of truth. . . .” In the strange proceedings in relation to witchcraft in 1692, though three of the judges<sup>1</sup> who condemned the persons executed for that crime were members of his church, and to express doubts of the guilt of the accused, was to expose one’s self to accusation and condemnation, [he] had the courage to express his decided disapprobation of the measures pursued, to use his influence to arrest them, and to aid some who were imprisoned awaiting their trial, to escape from the colony. And he had the satisfaction soon to see a stop put to those unhappy proceedings, and the judicious part of the community came over to his opinion.—Wisner, *Four Sermons*, p. 14.

Hutchinson says of the judges that they did not change as soon as the juries. . . . One of them, however, when he came to be convinced of the terrible mistake he had made, did everything in his power to manifest his sorrow and contrition. . . . [Judge Sewall] openly acknowledged his sin, and asked the pardon of his fellowmen, in the congregation. A public fast had been appointed by the Governor and Council for the 14th of January, 1696-7. . . . On the afternoon of the Fast Day the judge handed to Mr. Willard as, in gown and bands, he was passing up one of the “alleys” to the pulpit, the following “bill” to be read by him:—

“Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterated strokes of God upon himself and family; and being sensible, that as to the Guilt contracted upon

seemed angry, and said He would not so break his word for all the Massachusetts Colony, and therefore, to avoid mistakes, must give in writing what we had to say; we answered, Mr. Randolph brought not any writing to those he spoke to. Governour . . . mention’d folks backwardness to give, and the unreasonableness; . . . we . . . would not give to build them an house: Said came from England to avoid such and such things, therefore could not give to set them up here: and the Bishops would have thought strange to have been ask’d to contribute towards setting up the New-England Churches.—Samuel Sewall, “Diary,” Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. 5, Fifth Series, Boston, 1878, Vol. 1, pp. 217-218.

Thus we may mark the temper of the South Congregation in controversy with [the first royal governor over the right to use its own property for its own religious purposes. This incident well serves to illustrate the Andros régime. Again the South Church had stood out against popular rights.

<sup>1</sup> Wait Winthrop, Samuel Sewall, and Peter Sergeant. Hill, 1. p. 285.





In the above section of William Price's View of Boston, 1743, No. "10" is the first or "Cedar" meeting-house of the South Church. It was built in 1669 by Robert Tweld and gave way to the present meeting-house on the same site in 1729. For some description of it see p. 27 of this leaflet.

The illustration is from a similar one owned by Mrs. John E. Rousmaniere [Miss Mary Farwell Ayer] and it is reproduced here by her kind permission. In a valuable contribution to the history of the original South Meeting-house contained in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register for July, 1905, Mrs. Rousmaniere uncovered this, the only detailed view known of the old building. A comparison chanced to be made of two copies of Price's View and disclosed the fact that a copy in the British Museum was probably made about 1725, before the plate had been altered to include the present Old South Meeting-house, built in 1729. The alteration had been made by pasting a drawing of the new meeting-house over the old building on the earlier engraving, and it was only because the old belfry had not been entirely covered that the discovery was made. Through the kindness of authorities at the British Museum, Mrs. Rousmaniere was able to have the paster picture stripped back and the lines of the old cedar meeting-house brought to light as shown above.

No. "9" in the drawing is "The Governor's House" [The Province House, nearly opposite the head of Milk street, but some distance back from the main street. It was built in 1679 and was the official residence of most of the royal governors].



the opening of the late Commission of Oyer and Terminer at Salem (to which the order for this Day relates) he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and shame of it, Asking pardon of men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that sin and all other his sins; personal and Relative: and according to his infinite Benignity, and Sovereignty, not Visit the sin of him, or of any other, upon himself or any of his, nor upon the Land: But that He would powerfully defend him against all Temptations to Sin, for the future; and vouchsafe him the efficacious, saving Conduct of his Word and Spirit."

The good judge stood, as this solemn confession was read by his minister in his behalf, and bowed at its close. In all his distinguished career he was never so great as at that moment.<sup>1</sup>—Hill, *Hist. Old South Church*, Vol. I, pp. 290–292.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BAPTIZED IN THE SOUTH MEETING-HOUSE.<sup>2</sup>

"Jan. 6. [1706] Benjamin, of Josiah & Abiah Franklin."<sup>3</sup>

EARLY NOTICES OF THE OLD SOUTH IN THE TOWN RECORDS.

At a meeting of the Free-holders and other inhabi<sup>ts</sup> of the Town of Boston, duly qualified & warned according to Law, being Convened at the South Meeting-House<sup>4</sup> in Boston the 14th day of May 1712.

Isaac Addington Esq<sup>r</sup> is chosen y<sup>e</sup> Moderator for this Meeting.

... Whereas the Comittee appointed the 11th of March Last to enquire after a piece of Land at the North end of this Town Sutable to Sett a School House on. Have now Signified

<sup>1</sup> In 1700 Sewall published his "The Selling of Joseph,"—"the first public plea for the emancipation of the negro."—Lindsay Swift, "The Massachusetts Election Sermons," Cambridge, 1897, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the original "Cedar meeting-house," built in 1669, which did not give way to the present building until 1729. Cf. editorial on page 27.

<sup>3</sup> This is the record, on the books of the Third Church, of Benjamin Franklin's baptism on the very day of his birth. He was the youngest son of Josiah and Abiah (Folger) Franklin, who respectively "owned the Baptismal Covenant" in 1685 and 1688, and were received into full membership in the Third Church, in 1694. ("An Historical Catalogue of the Old South Church," Boston, 1883, pp. 108, 112, and 18.)

There is disagreement over the actual birthplace of Franklin. By many he is said to have been born on what is now Milk Street, directly across from that side of the meeting-house. A bust of Franklin on the building at No. 17 marks the site of the house his father occupied for a considerable period before he moved to the corner of Hanover and Union Streets. There is a reference in the Boston Town Records, 1660 to 1701, p. 197, "April 27, 1690 . . . Granted Libertie to Josiah Frankline to erect a buildinge . . . vpon the Land belonging to Lt Nath<sup>a</sup> Reynolds neere the South Meetinge house." In 1719, Josiah Franklin received several votes for the office of deacon in the South Church.

<sup>4</sup> This is the first recorded town-meeting in the South Meeting-house. The Town-house and the meeting-house of the First Church had been burnt in "the great fire" of 1711. At about this time also the annual Election Sermon, which from 1634 to 1885 was preached at the gathering of the General Court, began to be reserved to the South Meeting-house and was delivered here during most of the time thereafter. (L. Swift, "Election Sermons," p. 62.)

to this meeting that they have . . . at length pitched on a piece of Land. . . on Bennet Street, and the other end on Love Street, w<sup>ch</sup> they Recommend to the Town as the most sutable place w<sup>ch</sup> they Can procure for that use.

Voted. That the S<sup>d</sup> Comittee be impowered to purchase afore said parcell of Land, to be paid for out of the Town Treasury: . . .<sup>1</sup>

—*Boston Town Records, 1700 to 1728*, p. 338, the original pagination of the MS books being used throughout this leaflet.

At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston legally qualified and warned in publick Town Meeting Assembled at the Town House on Monday the Ninth Day of March Anno Dom<sup>o</sup>. 1761. . . .

Voted that this Meeting be adjourned to Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. Sewalls Meeting House <sup>2</sup> [Old South].<sup>3</sup> 3 O'Clock in the Afternoon. . . .

Voted, that this Meeting be adjourned to meet at the Town House, to Morrow Morning 9 O'Clock Forenoon.

9 O'Clock A.M. Met according to adjournment and further adjourned to the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. Sewalls Meeting House. . . .

—*Boston Town Records, 1758 to 1769*, pp. 464-476.

#### THOMAS PRINCE, PASTOR.

[Thomas Prince, from his ordination, Oct. 1, 1718, to his death, Oct. 22, 1758, pastor of the Old South Church, was a man of wide influence. He had reputation as an historian and as a collector of historical material, to which reference is made on p. 29 of this leaflet. He was furthermore a faithful minister and shared the Old South pulpit of his colleague, Joseph Sewall, during the whole of his pastorate. Sewall was ordained Sept. 26, 1713, and died Oct. 22, 1758, at the age of eighty years. They were together in the same work for forty years. For his time, Thomas Prince had an enlightened mind and more than once was conspicuous for breadth of intellectual vision.]

I might go on to mention a great Variety of *other Righteous Acts* of the LORD our GOD to this Covenant People, both corrective and merciful . . . as distressing Droughts and Scarcities . . . [*et cetera*]; *Vexations* from those that have envied and hated us; the cruel taking away of our most deare bought *Privileges*, the most grievous Affliction of all others, and their wonderful Restoration; The insupportable Power of strange *Oppressors*, and the surprizing appearance of GOD for our *Rescue*, when no other Arm could save us, and our Hope was almost perished from before Him.—But the time would fail me.—

I shall therefore only mention one remarkable *Work* of GOD which appears to me to be full of Wonder, and a visible and constant Monument

<sup>1</sup> The first of the Old South town-meetings, then, was chiefly devoted to providing the land for a famous North End public school. The school lot on Love lane, now Tileston street, is occupied by the Eliot School.

<sup>2</sup> The first recorded adjournment of a town-meeting to the "Old South," apparently because of its greater capacity.

<sup>3</sup> In 1717 the church that was gathered on Summer street took the name of "New South." Thereafter the Third Church was called the "Old South."



of his special Favour and Appearance for us—and that is this—On the account of our pure Religion, we have been all along a People misrepresented, envied and maligned above any other on Earth. We have had continually for this *Hundred Years* many powerful and active Enemies, and but few and feeble Friends to stand up for us and pleade our Cause—How comes it then to pass that we have greater civil & religious Privileges than almost any others!—The most high GOD has been our Friend. . . . He has removed Kings and set up Kings; He has carried the Devices of the crafty headlong, . . . And when our Case has been so helpless that we cou'd only Pray, we have then stood still and seen the Salvation of GOD— . . . Let it be ever marvellous in our Eyes: And let him have all the Glory.

And so let Him have the Glory likewise of all his *other Works*, both of Judgement and of Mercy to us. Let us frequently call them to mind, peruse the published Histories of them, and teach them to our children after us.

—Thomas Prince, [*Election*] *Sermon delivered . . . Before the Great and General Assembly of the Massachusetts, May 27, 1730*, pp. 31-32.

#### PROTEST AGAINST THE IMPRESSMENT OF SAILORS.

[The public satisfaction over the repeal of the Stamp Act was short-lived. On June 2nd, 1767, Parliament, under lead of Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer, voted duties upon paint, paper, glass, and tea admitted into the colonies in America, probably for the mixed purpose of raising revenue and "trying out" the question of taxation. The leaders here met the new measure with agreements not to import and not to buy the goods taxed. Revenue laws had been systematically evaded in the colonies for more than a century, and now the practice of smuggling became even more widespread. On November 2nd, 1767, when the new laws were effective, the Boston town-meeting, guided by James Otis, counselled moderation and called upon the inhabitants to refrain from any overt opposition. On January 20th, 1768, the Massachusetts House of Representatives petitioned the king for a redress of grievances. The original draft by Samuel Adams was revised no less than seven times with the express object of making it a "Dutiful Petition." The next month, February 4th and 11th, the same representatives voted "a Letter [the famous Massachusetts Circular Letter] to . . . the several Houses of Representatives and Burgesses on this Continent, to inform them of the Measures which this House have taken with regard to the Difficulties they are apprehensive will arise from the operation of several Acts of Parliament for levying Duties and Taxes on the *American Colonies*. . . ." (*Journal of the . . . House of Representatives*, . . . 27 May, 1767—4 March, 1768, pp. 140 *et seq.* The resolution to petition the king is on pp. 121-2.)

All along the sea-board "the language which had been familiar under the Stamp Act again was heard," but Massachusetts had taken the lead. In Boston itself a sharp issue was soon raised. The presence of the British Sloop-of-War "Romney" (50 guns), sent to help enforce the authority of the newly created Board of Commissioners of Customs, resident here, led to a long train of important historical incidents. Her commander had seen fit to apprehend and impress New England sailors as they were returning up Boston harbor from voyages at sea. They were impressed "for the service of the King, in his ships of war." On June 10th came the seizure of John Hancock's sloop "Liberty." Violation of the obnoxious revenue laws was charged and the customs officers caused the vessel to be moved under guard of the "Romney." Public feeling ran high against the crew of the gun-boat, there were hostile demonstrations against the customs commissioners, and a serious riot nearly ensued. This circumstance was the occasion of the town-meeting on the 14th. While the provincial leaders deprecated the tumult over the seizure, they held that the whole proceeding was an invasion of public rights.]

At a legal Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston at Faneuil Hall June 14<sup>th</sup>: Anno. Dom: 1768—

The Warrant for calling the Meeting — — — Read—

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. James Otis Esq. was chosen Moderator of this Meeting, and took the usual Oaths, . . . —

Faneuil Hall not being capacious enough to receive all the Inhabitants assembled, and those within the Walls being incommoded by the crowd—A Motion was made and it was accordingly Voted, that this Meeting be Adjourned to Meet at the Old South Church; at which place the Inhabitants Met according to Adjournm<sup>t</sup>.

After very cool and deliberate Debates upon the distressed Circumstances of the Town, and the present critical Situation of their Affairs, it was unanimously, Voted, that

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. James Otis Esq. Moderator. . . .

John Hancock, Esq.

Dr. Joseph Warren. . . .

Mr. Samuel Adams. . . .

Mr. Josiah Quincy [and seventeen others]

be & hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on his Excellency the Governor of the Province, with the following Petition—Viz<sup>t</sup>.—

Province of	}	To His Excellency Francis Bernard
the		Esq. Governour and Commander
Massachusetts		in Chief, in and over said Province
Bay—		and Vice Admiral the same.

The Inhabitants of the Town of Boston in Town Meeting legally Assembled—  
Humbly Shew

That your Petitioners consider the British Constitution as the Basis of their safety and happiness; By that is established no Man shall be govern'd nor taxed but by himself or Representative legally and fairly chosen; and in which he does not give his own consent. In open violation of these fundamental Rights of Britons, Laws & Taxes are imposed on us to which we have not only not given our consent but against which we have most firmly Remonstrated<sup>1</sup>—Dutiful Petitions have been preferred to our most gracious Sovereign, which (though to the great consternation of the People, we now learn, have been cruelly and insiduously prevented reaching the Royal Presence) we have waited to receive a Gracious answer to, with the greatest attention to the publick peace, untill we find ourselves invaded with an armed force, Siezing, impressing the Persons of our Fellow Subjects contrary to express Acts of Parliament. Menaces have been thrown out, fit only for Barbarians which already effect us in the most sensible manner, and threaten us with Famine & Desolation, as all Navigation is obstructed, upon which alone our whole support depends, and the Town is at this Crisis in a Situation nearly such, as if War was formally declared against it. To contend with our Parent State is

<sup>1</sup> Of the Townshend revenue acts and the suddenness of their visitation, an excellent English authority, Sir George O. Trevelyan, writes “—the step was taken, and taken in the name of Chatham, which in one day reversed the policy that he had nearest at heart, and undid the work of which he was most justly proud. The Boston Massacre and succeeding events. . . —all flowed in direct and inevitable consequence from that fatal escapade. . . . For the colonists, one and all, irrespective of class, creed, and calling, it was indeed a rude awakening.” Cf. “The American Revolution,” London, 1899, Part I., pp. 32-33.



The Old South Meeting-House  
Boston



1729

## The History of the Old South

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(The following was written by William Everett in 1876, when it was planned to sell the Old South Meeting-house, and the land under it separately, with a provision that the Meeting-house must be torn down. The movement, in which what is written below was of great assistance, was successful, and the Old South Meeting-house was saved for us all.)

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**H**ERE was the garden originally granted to *John Winthrop*, the great governor; and *here* he died, 26th March, 1649.

*Here*, after Winthrop's death, lived *Rev. John Norton*, chosen by John Cotton on his death-bed, as his successor, and called by Cotton Mather "the chief of our burning and shining lights." *Here* he died 6th April, 1663.

*Here*, in John Norton's household, was bred *Increase Mather*, to whom New England and Harvard College owe so much.

*Here* was built, in 1669, the first house of worship of the *Third or Old South Church*, which withdrew from the *First Church*, to provide a more liberal entrance into the Church, and consequently a wider civil franchise. *This ground* was given them by Madam Mary Norton.

*Here* Sir Edmund Andros forcibly caused the Episcopal form of worship to be celebrated.

*Here*, in the *Old House*, in 1696, Judge Sewall stood up in his pew, while his confession of contrition was read for his share in the witchcraft delusion of 1692.

In 1691, Josiah Franklin was allowed to build in the neighborhood, and on Jan. 17, 1706, *here*, in the *old meeting-house*, Benjamin Franklin was baptized.

*Here*, [perhaps] in the same year, a town-meeting was held to consult on fortifying the harbor against an expected French invasion.

In March, 1729, the *old cedar meeting-house*, which had stood for two generations, was pulled down; a new one of brick was begun forthwith, and *here*, on the 26th April, 1730, was dedicated *this meeting-house*, the existing Old South. It was built according to the best taste of the time, and forcibly recalls Sir Christopher Wren's churches. The inside has undergone repairs and renovations, as have the contemporary College Halls at Cambridge and any buildings of that age that have received equally rough usage. These repairs have always strictly preserved its character.



*In this building*, in October, 1746, at the rumor of the coming of D'Anville's fleet, Rev. Thomas Prince, the pastor, and a historical scholar of the first eminence, prayed the Almighty's help—

“And even as I prayed  
The answering tempest came;  
It came with a mighty power,  
Shaking the windows and walls,  
And tolling the bell in the tower  
As it tolls at funerals.  
The fleet it overtook,  
And the broad-sails in the van  
Like the tents of Cushan shook,  
Or the curtains of Midian.  
Down on the reeling decks,  
Crashed the o'erwhelming seas,—  
O never were there wrecks  
So terrible as these.”—*Longfellow*.

When the colonies came into collision with Great Britain, and Faneuil Hall proved repeatedly too small for the town-meetings of the patriots, they were adjourned *here*, and an “Old South meeting” became famous to Chatham and Burke.

*In this House*, on June 14, 1768, *James Otis* being moderator, a meeting was held to compel Governor Bernard to remove from the harbor a war vessel, stationed to enforce the odious impressment and customs laws.

*In this House*, in March, 1770, after the Boston massacre, an overflowing town-meeting waited till night, while *Samuel Adams* went back and forward to the State House till Hutchinson yielded and withdrew the regiments.

*In this House*, on Nov. 29, 1773, a meeting of five thousand citizens resolved that the tea should not be landed, and *in this House*, on Dec. 16, 1773, a meeting of several thousand citizens sat till after candlelight listening to *Josiah Quincy, Jr.*, and *Samuel Adams*, while messenger after messenger went to get redress of Hutchinson, at Milton. He refused, and *at the doors of this House* the war-whoop was raised, the citizens disguised as savages led the way to the tea-ships, and the tea was destroyed.

*Here*, June 27, 1774, the tories attempted to capture a town-meeting in the interests of Gage and the Boston Port-bill, censure the *Committee of Correspondence*, and nip the *Continental Congress* in the bud, and it sat for two days, ending in the triumph of the patriots and the sustaining of the Committee.

*Here* were delivered the series of orations from 1771 to 1775, commemorative of the Boston Massacre, by Lovell, Warren, Church, Hancock, and for the second time by *Joseph Warren*, three months before he was killed at Bunker Hill. He was introduced through a window in the rear of the pulpit, the aisles and steps of the pulpit being filled with British soldiers and officers.

*Here*, in 1775, by order of General Burgoyne, a riding school for British troops was established, pews and pulpits being torn away and broken up; and when *Washington* made his triumphal entry into Boston, in March, 1776, he paused, and entering *this building*, looked down from the eastern gallery on the scene of desolation.

*Here*, finally, for a long number of years, had been preached the annual election sermon before the governor and legislature of Massachusetts.

The *ground* where the Old South stands,—the *old meeting-house*, first built there, and the *present meeting-house*—have been the scene of some of the greatest crises, guided by some of the greatest men in our history. We want to keep *on this ground*, where such things happened, *this building*, in which such men worked.

WILLIAM EVERETT.

The interior was restored in 1783, and the South Church congregation continued to worship here until the great fire of 1872.

In 1874 the South Church congregation removed to and occupied the church in Copley Square. Thereafter, in 1876, the Meeting-house was sold at auction for \$1,350, with a provision that it should be torn down and removed within sixty days. It was intended to sell the land separately for \$400,000. On the Centennial of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1876, a "Town Meeting" was called in the Meeting-house to protest. Speeches were made by Wendell Phillips and others. A Preservation Committee was formed, headed by the Governor.

The building and land were bought by the women of the State, and the Old South was saved and since 1877 has been held as a historical monument and a place for patriotic inspiration and instruction. It is owned by the Old South Association in Boston, a corporation specially chartered to preserve it.

Among the many objects of interest in the Old South loan collection are:

Joseph Warren's christening cap  
Warren's day-book  
"Tea Party" tea  
The Prophet's Bowl from Tippecanoe  
Musket from Battle of Lexington  
Model of "Old Ironsides"  
(Made by one of her crew)  
Bone's miniature of Washington  
Washington letters  
Quilt from Martha Washington's dresses  
Model of Boston in 1775  
Old-time household furnishings  
Manuscripts, broadsides and portraits



in our Idea the most shocking and dreadful Extremity; but tamely to relinquish the only security we and our Posterity retain of the enjoyment of our Lives & Properties, without one struggle is so humiliating and base, that we cannot support the Reflection;<sup>1</sup> we apprehend Sir, That it is at your option, in your power, and we would hope in your inclination, to prevent this distressed and Justly incensed People, from effecting too much, and from the shame and reproach of attempting too little.

... We flatter ourselves your Excellency will in tenderness to this People, use the best means in your power, to remove the other grievance, we so Justly complain of, and issue your immediate Order to the Commander of his Majesty's Ship Romney, to remove from this Harbour, 'till we shall be ascertained of the success of our Applications.—...

—*Boston Town Records, 1767 to 1769, pp. 95-98, printed, &c.*

His Excellency being at his country seat, at Roxbury, [Jamaica Plain] the gentlemen of the committee immediately set out in eleven carriages; on their arrival, they were very politely received, and their Chairman, presented the petition to his Excellency, who was pleased to inform them, that next day in the afternoon, an answer should be delivered in writing.<sup>2</sup>

—*The Boston Chronicle for 1768, June 13-20, p. 253.*

*We are authorized to inform the public, that Capt. Corner, [Comer] Commander of his Majesty's ship Romney, in case he should want any more men, will not take any belonging to, or married in the province, nor any employed in the trade along shore, or to the neighbouring colonies.*

—*The Boston Chronicle for 1768, June 13-20, p. 253.*

[June 21st, 1768, the governor transmitted, in part, to the provincial assembly, an order of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Hillsborough, requiring that body, in the king's name, immediately to repudiate its circular letter of February 11th to the other colonies. The insistence of the house brought forth the full text of Lord Hillsborough's remarkable missive. In it the representatives were told to rescind the resolution under which the circular letter was sent, or the governor "would immediately dissolve them," and their case would be laid before Parliament, in order "that such Provisions as shall be found necessary be made to prevent, for the future, a Conduct of so extraordinary and unconstitutional a Nature." To the governor this further language was used,—“As it is not his Majesty's Intention that a faithful Discharge of your Duty should operate to your own prejudice, or to the Discontinuance of any necessary Establishments, proper Care will be taken for the Support of the Dignity of Government.” The House of Representatives answered, on June 30th, flatly declining to rescind their resolution, by what became a famous vote, 92 to 17. (Journal of the . . . House of Representatives, &c., 25 May-30 June, 1768, pp. 68-69, and 89.) The action of the British ministry amounted to a denial of the right to petition.]

<sup>1</sup> For the attitude of the colonists was not that of slaves seeking liberty, but of freemen—freemen for five generations—resisting political servitude.—Mellen Chamberlain, "John Adams . . . with other Essays . . ." Boston, 1898, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> The governor replied in substance, that impressment was practised in all the king's dominions, that therefore he could not dispute it in this part of them, but that he would use his "utmost endeavors to get it regulated so as to avoid all the inconveniences to this Town"; he desired, he said, to be a faithful servant in regard to both the people here and their "Parent State," but he had "no command over his Majesty's Ships," and could not issue any order to the commander of the "Romney." That he did "get it regulated" appears from the news item in the Chronicle, relating to Capt. Comer.

## AN OLD SOUTH MEETING DEMANDS THE REMOVAL OF THE KING'S REGIMENTS.

[The proceedings of 1768 meant troops for Boston, and in October they came, eight ships of war with infantry and cannon: in a short time enough detachments to furnish "at least one red-coat for every five of the men, women, and children who made up the total of her seventeen thousand inhabitants." (G. O. Trevelyan, p. 38.)

(There are 4000 troops ordered for Boston, which, it is thought, will sufficiently intimidate those people to comply with the law enacted in England; especially as the other colonies seem to have deserted them, the congress which they had entered into being broken. . .

—From the London letter dated August 1st, 1768, in the supplement to *The Boston Chronicle*, No. 44, Oct. 10-17, 1768, p. 401.)

A standing army was now quartered on a "free city" in a time of peace, another infringement of an ancient English political right. Cf. *Petition of Right*, 1628.

Field officers and staff were assigned to the Town-house, (now the Old State House) and the main guard was stationed with its guns pointed to the south entrance.

June 14, 1769, the House of Representatives protested against the presence of an armed force at its meeting place and was thereupon removed to Cambridge at the order of the governor. It now refused to proceed with any public business except "from Necessity." "The House regarded a Standing Army posted within the Province in a Time of the most profound Peace, and uncontrollable by any Authority in it, as a dangerous Innovation; and a Guard of Soldiers with Cannon planted at the Doors of the State House [*sic*], while the General Assembly was there held, as the most pointed Insult ever offered to a free People, and its whole Legislative. This, Sir, . . . was the principal Cause of the Non-activity of the Assembly."—Answer to the governor, "*Journal* . . . 12 May, 1769—26 April, 1770," pp. 23-26.

The same month certain of the troops were ordered away, leaving but two regiments, the Fourteenth and the Twenty-ninth, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Dalrymple.]

At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston legally qualified and warned in publick Town Meeting Assembled at Faneuil Hall on Tuesday the 6 Day of March Anno Domini 1770—3 O'Clock, P: M:<sup>1</sup>—

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. Thomas Cushing Esq. was chosen Moderator of this Meeting— —

Faneuil Hall not being Capasious enough to receive the Inhabitants who attended; Voted, that this Meeting be Adjourned to Dr. Sewalls Meeting House— —<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As climax to a succession of street-fights between men and boys about town, and individual British soldiers, a file of the latter had been aggravated into firing on a turbulent crowd in King street by the Town-house. Three of the inhabitants were killed outright, two died, and six more were seriously maimed. This was the "Boston Massacre," Mar. 5, 1770. All the bitterness and resentment over the presence of the forces broke into flame over the episode. The air was surcharged with hatred of the red-coats and the ministry that had sent them. Bells were rung and a great meeting was held at eleven o'clock the next morning in Faneuil Hall "occasioned by the Massacre made in King Street, by the Soldiery the preceeding Night,"—various "informations" "were given in" and a committee appointed to wait on the lieutenant-governor, and tell him "that the Inhabitants and Soldiery can no longer dwell together in safety. . . ."

The provincial leaders determined to use the episode to its fullest extent in forcing the withdrawal of the troops. To this end the public proceedings were shaped in most compelling fashion. Sir Francis Bernard had left for England eight months before, and Thomas Hutchinson, Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice, who, although of old Boston family, had thrown in his lot on the king's side, was acting governor.

<sup>2</sup> It was a short walk, then, that the committee had to take—from the head of King (now State) Street to the head of Milk Street. But it was a walk which Samuel Adams turned to momentous account. Hat in hand, he passed, with his fellows, between the double row of townspeople overflowing from the meeting-house into the streets. Right and left as he walked, he turned to the eager citizens, and said, and said again, "Both regiments or none!" . . . Once within the Old South, the committee delivered its message: one regiment might go to the Castle in the harbor if the magistrates must have it so. But from all the people, crowding the floor, stairways, doors and galleries, rolled back the words of Adams, "Both regiments or none!"

—M. A. DeWolfe Howe, "Boston, the Place and the People," New York, 1903, p. 95.





The second or "Brick" meeting-house of the Old South Church, now standing. It was built in 1729, supposedly by Joshua Blanchard, a master builder of the time.

The Committee appointed to deliver a Message of the Town to his Honor Leuvitenant Governor, Reported, and laid before the Town the Reply they had received from his Honor in Writing which is as follows— —

*Gentlemen*

I am extremely sorry for the unhappy differences between the Inhabitants and the Troops—and especially for the action of the last Evening, and I have exerted myself upon that occasion, that a due inquiry may be made and that the Law may have its course. I have in Council consulted with the Commanding Officers of the two Regiments which are in the Town. They have their Orders from the General at New York. It is not in my power to countermand those Orders. The Council have desired that the Two Regiments may be removed to the Castle. From the particular concern which the 29<sup>th</sup>. Regiment has had in these differences Collo. Dalrymple who is the Commanding Officer of the Troops has signified to me that the Regiments shall without delay be placed in the Barracks at the Castle until he can send to The General and receive his further Orders concerning both the Regiments and that the Main Guard shall be removed and the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiments so disposed and laid under such restraint, that all occasion of future differences may be prevented— —

The foregoing Reply having been read, and fully considered the Question was put—“Whether the Report be satisfactory—  
—Passed in the Negative almost unanimously—(but one dissentient)— —

It was then moved and Voted, that

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. John Hancock Esq.

Mr. Samuel Adams

Mr. William Mollineux

William Phillips Esq

Dr. Joseph Warren

Joshua Henshaw Esq.

Samuel Pemberton Esq.

be and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on his honor the Lieu<sup>t</sup>. Governor, and inform him, that it is the unanimous opinion of this Meeting, that the Reply made to a Vote of the Inhabitants presented his Honor in the Morning is by no means satisfactory, and that nothing less will satisfy them, than a total and immediate removal of the Troops.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams for the Committee to Lt.-Gov. Hutchinson.—“It is well known, that, acting as Governor of the Province, you are by its charter the commander in chief of the military forces within it; and, as such, the troops now in the capital are subject to your orders. If you, or Col. Dalrymple under you, have power to remove one regiment, you have the power to remove both; and nothing short of their total removal will satisfy the people or preserve the peace of the Province. A multitude, highly incensed, now wait the result of this application. The voice of ten thousand freemen demands that both regiments be forthwith removed. Their voice must be respected, their demand obeyed. Fail, then, at your peril, to comply with this requisit on! On you alone rests



The Committee having waited upon his Honor the Lieut. Governor agreeable to the foregoing Vote; laid before the Inhabitants the following Vote of Council, removed from his Honor——

His Honor the Lieut. Governor laid before the Board a Vote of the Town of Boston passed this Afternoon, and then Addressed the Board as follows  
— —

Gentlemen of the Council I lay before you a Vote of the Town of Boston, which I have Just now received from them, and I now ask your advice what you Judge necessary to be done upon it—

The Council thereupon expressed themselves to be *unanimously* of Opinion that it was absolutely necessary for his Majestys service and the good order of the Town and the peace of the Province that the Troops should be immediately removed out of the Town of Boston, and thereupon advised his Honor to communicate this advice of the Council to Coll<sup>o</sup>. Dalrymple, and to pray that he would order the Troops down to Castle William——

The Committee also informed the Town, that Coll<sup>o</sup>. Dalrymple after having seen the above Vote of Council, said to the Committee That he now gave his word of honor that he would begin his preparation in the Morning, and that there should be no unnecessary delay untill the whole of the two Regiments were removed to the Castle—

The above Report of the Committee having been read by the Town Clerk; the Inhabitants could not but express the high satisfaction, which it afforded them——

—*Boston Town Records, 1770-1777, pp. 214-216.*

“I have represented to your lordship, that the authority of Government is gone in all matters wherein the controversy between the Kingdom and the colonies is concerned. There cannot be a plainer proof of it than I have now given to your Lordship. . . .”

—Thomas Hutchinson to the Earl of Hillsborough, *March, 1770, in Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, 1863, p. 487.*

#### THE FIFTH OF MARCH ANNIVERSARY ORATIONS.

[March 19, 1771.] The committee appointed to Consider of some Suitable Method to perpetuate the memory of the horred Massacre. . . . Reported . . . That for the present the Town make choice of a proper Person to deliver an Oration . . . to commemorate the barbarous murder of five of our Fellow

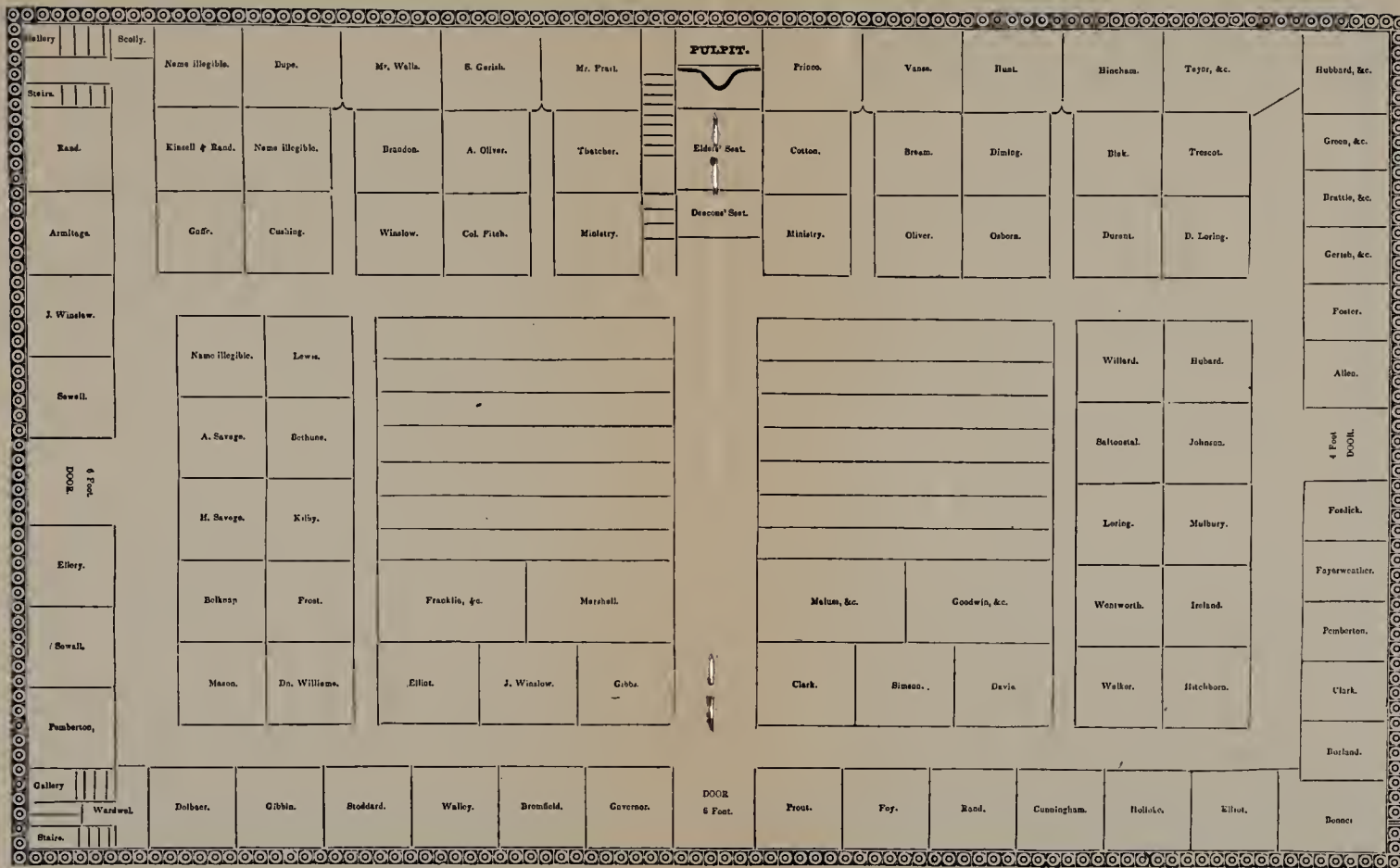
the responsibility of this decision; and, if the just expectations of the people are disappointed, you must be answerable to God and your country for the fatal consequences that must ensue. The committee have discharged their duty: it is for you to discharge yours. They wait your final determination.”

—J. K. Hosmer, *Samuel Adams, Boston, 1885, p. 173.*





PLAN OF THE LOWER FLOOR OF THE OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE, IN BOSTON, 1730.....Dimensions, 88 by 61 feet.



This plan is reproduced from one in Wisner's *Four Sermons* which was taken from the original in the files of the Old South Society. For description see p. 28 of this leaflet.

Citizens on that fatal Day, and to impress upon our minds the ruinous tendency of standing Armies in Free Cities, and the necessity of such noble exertions in all future times, as the Inhabitants of the Town there made, whereby the designs of the Conspirators against the public Liberty may be still frustrated. . . . and Mr. James Lovell [Master of the Latin school, 1734-1775] was unanimously chosen.<sup>1</sup>—*Boston Town Records, 1770-1773*, p. 293.

Every member feels it to be his interest, and knows it to be his duty, to preserve inviolate the constitution on which the public safety depends, and is equally ready to assist the magistrate in the execution of the laws, and the subject in defence of his right; and so long as this noble attachment to a constitution, founded on free and benevolent principles, exists in full vigor in any state, that state must be flourishing and happy. . . . Be wise in your deliberations, and determined in your exertions for the preservation of your liberties . . . enlist your selves under the sacred banner of reason. . . . If you perform your part . . . the same almighty Being who protected your . . . venerable forefathers, . . . will still be mindful of you—their offspring.—*Joseph Warren's first oration, Mar. 5, 1772.*

And could it have been conceived that we again should have seen a British army in our land, sent to enforce obedience to acts of parliament destructive of our liberty? But the royal ear, far distant from this western world, has been assaulted by the tongue of slander; and villains, traitorous alike to king and country, have prevailed upon a gracious prince to clothe his countenance with wrath, and to erect the hostile banner against a people ever affectionate and loyal to him and his illustrious predecessors of the house of Hanover. Our streets are again filled with armed men: our harbor is crowded with ships of war. But these cannot intimidate us. Our liberty must be preserved. . . . The man who meanly will submit to wear a shackle, contemns the noblest gift of Heaven, and impiously affronts the God that made him free.—*Joseph Warren's second oration, Mar. 6, 1775.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The oration was April 2nd, a committee was appointed "to select a proper Gentleman to deliver an oration on the 5th of March next," and the resolution was voted in almost the exact terms of the one previous. Indeed, this was the procedure, each 5th of March, here in the Old South, to repeat the words of the original vote, "to impress upon our minds, the ruinous tendency of standing Armies," &c., in 1772, 1773, and 1774. In 1775, the anniversary falling on Sunday, the day was March 6th, Joseph Warren was the orator, and again was voted the same resolution. Thereafter, until 1783, the orations were delivered elsewhere, but it is interesting to observe with what persistency the identical language was used, due probably to the fine hand of the "master agitator." These orations are to be found in a volume issued by Peter Edes in 1807, and some account of them is in J. S. Loring, "The Hundred Boston Orators," Boston, 1852.

<sup>2</sup> This was the occasion when Warren is said to have entered by the pulpit window, to avoid altercation with British officers who had blocked the front aisles and seated themselves on the pulpit stairs.

"I had long expected that they would take that occasion to beat up a breeze, and therefore (seeing many of the officers present before the orator came in), as moderator of the meeting, I took care to have them treated with civility, inviting them into convenient seats, so that they might have no pretence to behave ill; for it is a good maxim in politics, as well as in war, to put and keep the enemy in the wrong. They behaved tolerably well until the oration was finished, when, upon a motion made for the appointment of another orator, as usual, they began to hiss, which irritated the assembly to the greatest degree, and confusion ensued; they, however, did not gain their end,—which was apparently to break up the meeting,— . . ."—Samuel Adams, Letter to Richard Henry Lee, in Wells's life of the former, Boston, 1865, Vol. II., pp. 280, 281.

The orations in 1773 and 1774 were by Benjamin Church and John Hancock.



## THE MEETING THAT PRECEDED THE TEA PARTY.

[The revenue acts "had given birth to such dangerous combinations beyond the Atlantic," that the king's ministers felt impelled to some "composing measure." On the very day of the Boston "Massacre," Lord North, now First Lord of the Treasury, moved in the House of Commons the repeal of the duties levied in America under Charles Townshend's Act, with the single exception of the duty upon tea. But Parliament was by no means of one mind on the course to be taken. The king's speech at the opening of the session had contemptuously referred to the "distemper among the HORNE D CATTLE [that] had lately broken out in the kingdom," and "the infection from foreign parts," but Chatham, Burke, Conway, Barré, Meredith, and other friends of America who were fighting also for the liberties of Englishmen at home remained unabashed. They continued to inveigh against the policy of Government in general and the revenue acts in particular. The cabinet itself had recommended the retention of the tea-duty by a majority of only one. But the king and his friends were obdurate. "The contest in America . . . is now for no less than sovereignty on one side and independence on the other," cried Lord North. "Shall we, while they now deny our legal power to tax them, acquiesce in the argument of illegality and give up that power? Shall we betray ourselves out of compliment to them, and through a wish of rendering more than justice to America, resign the controuling supremacy of England? God forbid!" And by a vote of 204 to 142, the king's party had its way, the "3d per pound-weight avoirdupois" upon tea remained a law. (Parliamentary History of England, London, 1813, Vol. XVI, pp. 642, 852, *et seq.*) At first, in the colonies, there was a disposition to regard the repeal of all the other duties as a concession, although grudgingly made. Soon, however, the tea-tax grew into a commanding issue. This time, the leaders were fully persuaded that the king and the king's friends were in earnest to "try the question," and waited a move to be made. At length the East India Company, embarrassed by the non-importation agreements, and the increasing volume of illicit tea-trade with the Dutch, secured from Parliament a license to ship its tea free of duty in England, but subject to the stated tax here, the money to be remitted to the royal treasury by the company's agents. This was in the autumn of 1773, and at once ships were laden and consigned to principal American ports where designated persons were to act as consignees, or "tea commissioners." The colonists everywhere were roused to most determined preparations for resisting any and every attempt to land the cargoes.

In Boston, the tea-meetings, "of this and the neighboring towns," began to be held on Monday, November 29th, 1773, at Faneuil Hall, the first consignment having then arrived.

"A motion made that as this town have determined at a late meeting that they would, to the utmost of their power, prevent the landing of the tea, that the question be put, Whether this body are absolutely determined that the tea shall be returned to the place from whence it came, at all events. Passed in the affirmative unanimously.

"Upon a motion made, *Voted*, That this meeting be immediately adjourned to the Old South Meeting-house.

"At the Old South Meeting-house, met according to adjournment. A motion made and the question put, whether it is not the firm resolution of this meeting that the tea shall not only be sent back, but that it shall not pay a duty. Passed unanimously in the affirmative.

"A motion made, in order to give time to the consignees to consider and deliberate, that the meeting be adjourned to three o'clock. And the meeting was adjourned accordingly."—(Minutes of the Tea Meetings, 1773, in Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, Boston, 1884, Vol. XX., pp. 10-17.)

Other meetings, to the same general purpose, were held, again on the afternoon of November 29th, twice on the 30th, when a special night watch of twenty-five men, and riders to alarm the country towns should occasion arise, were provided for, and again on December 14th, when Mr. Rotch, owner of one of the tea ships, was sent for and required to apply for a clearance for his vessel. The report on Mr. Rotch's errand to the collector was the first matter before the meeting on the morning of December 16th.]

Thursday, 16 December. The Body<sup>1</sup> met by adjournment at the Old South Meeting-house.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The people assembled in Boston took the name of "the body," instead of "a legal town meeting," and began with that spirit with which all established powers ought [*i.e.* are accustomed] to act in the exercise of their legal constitutional authority. . . . The "form" of a town meeting was assumed, the select men of Boston, town clerk, &c., taking their usual places; but, the inhabitants of any other towns being admitted, it could not assume the name of a "legal" meeting of any town.—Thomas Hutchinson, "History of Massachusetts Bay," Vol. III., London, 1828, pp. 430-433.

<sup>2</sup> These minutes were printed from the handwriting of Thomas Cooper, Town Clerk, also clerk of the tea meetings, although the spelling has been corrected. The many erasures and corrections in the original are preserved in the Massachusetts Historical Society edition, showing the first form in which the people's votes took shape and the subsequent changes in their language.

The Committee to wait on the Collector, Mr. Harrison, reported as No. 2. [The Committee's report here follows.]

A demand made by Mr. Rotch, owner of the ship "Dartmouth," on Mr. Harrison, Collector of the Customs, and what followed thereon, Mr. Rotch made the demand in the following manner, viz.:—

"I am required and compelled at my peril by a Body of people assembled at the Old South Meeting-house yesterday, where Mr. Samuel Phillips Savage was President, to make a demand of you to give me a clearance for the ship 'Dartmouth' for London, in the situation she is now in, with the tea on board."

Upon which one of the Committee observed that they were present by order of the Body only as witnesses of the before-mentioned demand, and the answer that should be given.

Thereupon Mr. Harrison, the Collector, said to Mr. Rotch (Mr. Hallowell, the Comptroller, being present), "Then it is you make the demand?" Mr. Rotch answered, "Yes, I am compelled at my peril to." Then Mr. Harrison said to Mr. Rotch, "Your ship 'Dartmouth' entered with me the 30th November last, with dutiable articles on board, for which the duties have not been paid. I cannot therefore give you a clearance until she is discharged of those articles, consistent with my duty."

*Voted*, that Mr. Rotch be sent for.

Proceedings of Lexington read.

A letter from Plymouth, informing of Messrs. Clarkes'<sup>1</sup> vessel being on board, was read.

Mr. Rotch attended, and was asked whether he would protest against the Custom-house, and then demand a pass for the Castle.

Motioned. That this Body expect that he immediately protest against the Custom-house, and procure a pass of the Governor, and that he this day proceed with the vessel for London.

He replied that he would not comply, because it was impracticable; and being again asked whether he would order his vessel to sail this day, he replied he would not.

Mr. Rotch [was] desired to proceed in making protest and demanding a pass.

Adjourned to 3 o'clock P.M.

<sup>1</sup> John Singleton Copley, R.A., the celebrated painter, had married, in 1769, Susan, daughter of Richard Clarke, one of the consignees of the tea. Because of that relationship he had a part in the tea-meeting of December 14th.



Met per adjournment at 3 o'clock P.M.

*Voted*, That it is the sense of this Body that the use of tea is improper and pernicious.

*Voted*, That it is the opinion of this Body that every town in this Province appoint a committee of inspection to prevent the accursed tea [coming?] into any town in this Province.

*Voted*, upon a motion made, That it [is] the sense of this Body, to decide [?] by the former resolution, that they will not suffer the landing of the tea.

Mr. Rotch attended, and informed that he had demanded a pass for his vessel of the Governor, who answered, "He was willing to grant any thing consistent with the laws and his duty to the king, but that he could not give a pass unless the vessel was properly qualified from the Custom-house, but that he should make no distinction between this and any other vessel, provided she was properly cleared."

Mr. Rotch could not tarry, his protest not being finished, but informed that he told the Governor of the steps he had [taken] and was taking as to a protest.

Mr. Rotch was then asked whether he would send his vessel back with the tea under her present circumstances. He answered that he could not possibly comply, as he apprehended it would be to his ruin.

He was further asked whether he would land the tea. He answered he had no business with it unless he was properly called upon to do it, when he should attempt a compliance for his own security.<sup>1</sup>

*Voted*, That this meeting be dissolved, and it was accordingly dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

—*Minutes of the Tea Meetings, 1773, in Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, Boston, 1884, Vol. XX., pp. 10-17.*

<sup>1</sup> It was at this point that Samuel Adams arose and gave the signal that had evidently been agreed upon, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country." Thereupon a number of men, from fifty to ninety, supposedly "Sons of Liberty," partly disguised as Mohawk Indians, rushed by the porch of the meeting-house, and brandishing hatchets and whooping, ran down to the three tea-ships lying at Griffin's wharf. There, in three hours, in the dark, they broke open the three hundred forty-two chests that made up the cargoes, and threw the whole of the tea into the harbor.

<sup>2</sup> Some interesting details of the Tea Party are contained in a letter of Peter Edes, printed in M. H. S. Proceedings, Vol. XII., Boston, 1873, pp. 174-6. In the same series, Vol. XIX., pp. 134-6, are printed some letters of Governor Hutchinson, with interesting comment on early aspects of the tea question. Cf. Old South Leaflet No. 68, for excerpts from Hutchinson's account of the tea episode.

"I think we have put our enemies in the wrong, and they must in the judgment of rational men be answerable for the destruction of the tea which their own obduracy had rendered necessary." Samuel Adams, Letter, in Edward G. Porter, "Samuel Adams," Boston, 1885, p. 25.

"This is the most magnificent movement of all. There is a dignity, a majesty, a sublimity, in this last effort of the patriots, that I greatly admire. . . . This destruction of the

# TORIES DEFEATED IN TOWN MEETING, JUNE 27-28, 1774.

[On June 17th, John Adams, being chosen Moderator, in place of Samuel Adams, then attending the General Court at Salem, an adjourned town-meeting at Faneuil Hall "entered into the Consideration of the Article in the Warrant, Vizt. 'To consider & determine what Measures are proper to be taken upon the present Exigency of our public affairs, more especially relative to the late Edict of the British Parliament for B[lock]ing up the Harbour of Boston, & annihilating the Trade of this Town," and after very serious Debates thereon—

Voted, (with only one Dissident) That the Committee of Correspondence be enjoined forthwith to write to all the other Colonies, acquainting them that we are not idle, that we are deliberating upon the Steps to be taken on the present Exigencies of our public affairs; that our Brethren the landed Interest of the Province with an unexampled Spirit and Unanimity, are entering into a Non-Consumption agreement; And that we are waiting with anxious Expectation for the Result of a Continental Congress; whose Meeting we impatiently desire, & in whose Wisdom & Firmness we can Confide, & in whose Determinations we shall cheerfully acquiesce—

Voted, That this meeting be adjourned to 3 O'Clock P.M.—

3 O'Clock P.M. Met according to Adjournmt.

Agreeable to Order the Committee of Correspondence laid before the Town such Letters as they had received in Answer to the Circular Letter, wrote by them to the several Colonies, & also to the Sea-Port Towns in this Province, since the Receipt of the Boston Port Bill, & the same being publickly read—Whereupon—

Voted, unanimously, That our warmest thanks be transmitted to our Brethren on the Continent for that Humanity, Sympathy & Affection, with which they have been inspired, & which they have expressed towards this distressed Town, at this important Season

Voted, unanimously, that the thanks of the Town be, & hereby are given to the Committee of Correspondence to their Faithfulness, in the Discharge of their Trust, & that they be desired to continue their Vigilance & Activity in that Service— . . .

Adjourned to June 27<sup>th</sup> 10 O'Clock A.M.

—Boston Town Records, 1770-1777, pp. 519-521.]

## Port Bill adjournment.

Met agreeable to Adjournment June 27<sup>th</sup> 10 o'Clock A.M.

Mr. Samuel Adams in the Chair—

Moved & seconded that the Committee of Correspondence<sup>1</sup>

tea . . . must have so important consequences and so lasting, that I cannot but consider it an epoch in history." John Adams, "Diary," Dec. 17, 1773.

When the news of this violence reached England, it was evident to all that either the British Parliament must abandon its claim to enforce the payment of the tea duty or it would have to maintain its authority by force. Burke pleaded for a return to the older system under which Great Britain had been respected for so many years. "Revert," he said, "to your old principles . . . leave America . . . to tax herself . . . Leave the Americans as they anciently stood." . . . The king, Lord North, and [their subservient majority in] Parliament, thought otherwise. They saw that there was anarchy in America, as far as English law was concerned, and they conceived it to be their duty and their right to bring it to an end. In 1774 was passed the Boston Port Act [effective June 1st], prohibiting the landing or shipping of goods at Boston; the Massachusetts Government Act, transferring the appointment of the Council [and] all judges and administrative officers from a popular electorate to the Crown; and another Act forbidding public meetings without the leave of the governor. In order to keep down resistance, a soldier, General Gage, was sent to be governor of Massachusetts.

—S. R. Gardiner, "A Student's History of England," London, 1898, pp. 780-782.

[The ministry] was in fact a mere cloak for the direction of public affairs by George himself. . . . [His] immense patronage was steadily used for the creation and maintenance in both Houses of Parliament of a majority directed by the King himself; and its weight was seen in the steady action of such a majority. It was seen yet more in the subjection to which the ministry that bore North's name was reduced. George was in fact the minister through the twelve years of its existence, from 1770 till the close of the American war; and the shame of the darkest hour of English history lies wholly at his door.

—J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People," pp. 776-777, 1898 ed., London.

It should be remembered that the history of America to 1783 is part of the history of England, and that similarly the history of England to the same year is part of the history of America.

<sup>1</sup> In town-meeting, at Faneuil Hall, Monday, November 2nd, 1772, on receipt from Governor Hutchinson of an unfavorable reply to their petition of October 30th to allow the General Court "too meet at the time to which they now stand prorogued," in which



be desired to lay the Letters they have wrote to the other Towns and Governments since the receipt of the Port Bill,—the question being put—Passed in the Affirmative—

Upon a Motion made, Voted, that this Meeting be adjourned to the Old South Meeting House, the Hall <sup>1</sup> not being sufficient to contain all the Inhabitants assembled—[and a committee was named] to wait upon the Proprietors Committee of that House for leave to make Use of it.

The Town being again met according to Adjournment—Motion was made & passed, That all Letters received as well as the Answers returned, be laid before the Town and read—

After the Town Clerk had accordingly read a Number of Letters, a Motion was made that the said Vote be so far Reconsidered, as that the Reading of all other Letters previous to the Covenant sent into the Country by the Committee of Correspondence, & the Letters accompanying the same, be suspended for the present, & that the Town proceed to the Reading of said Letter & Covenant, & any other Letters that may be particularly called for—

The said Covenant & a Number of Letters having been read, a Motion was made, that some Censure be now passed

rely the governor had said, in part,—“If . . . in compliance with your Petition I should . . . meet the Assembly, contrary to my own Judgement at such time as you Judge necessary, I should in effect yield to you the exercise of that part of the prerogative and should be unable to justify my conduct to the King—There would moreover be danger of encouraging the Inhabitants of the other Towns in the Province to Assemble from time to time in order to consider of the necessity or expediency of a Session of the General Assembly or to debate & transact other matters which the Law that authorizes Towns to Assemble, does not make the business of a Town Meeting”—the following action was taken,—

“The foregoing Reply having been read several times and duly considered; it was moved & the Question accordingly put Whether the same be satisfactory to the Town; which passed in the Negative *Nem. Cont.* And thereupon—

“RESOLVED as the Opinion of the Inhabitants of this Town that they have ever had, and ought to have a right to Petition the King or his Representatives for the Redress of such Grievances as they feel or for preventing of such as they have reason to apprehend, and to communicate their Sentiment to other Towns

“It was then moved by Mr. Samuel Adams, That a Committee of Correspondence be appointed to consist of twenty one Persons—to state the Rights of the Colonists and of this Province in particular, as Men, as Christians, and as Subjects; to communicate and publish the same to the several Towns in this Province and to the World as the sense of this Town, with the Infringements and Violations thereof that have been, or from time to time may be made—Also requesting of each Town a free communication of their Sentiments on this Subject—And the Question being accordingly put—Passed in the Affirmative, *Nem. Cont.*—Also

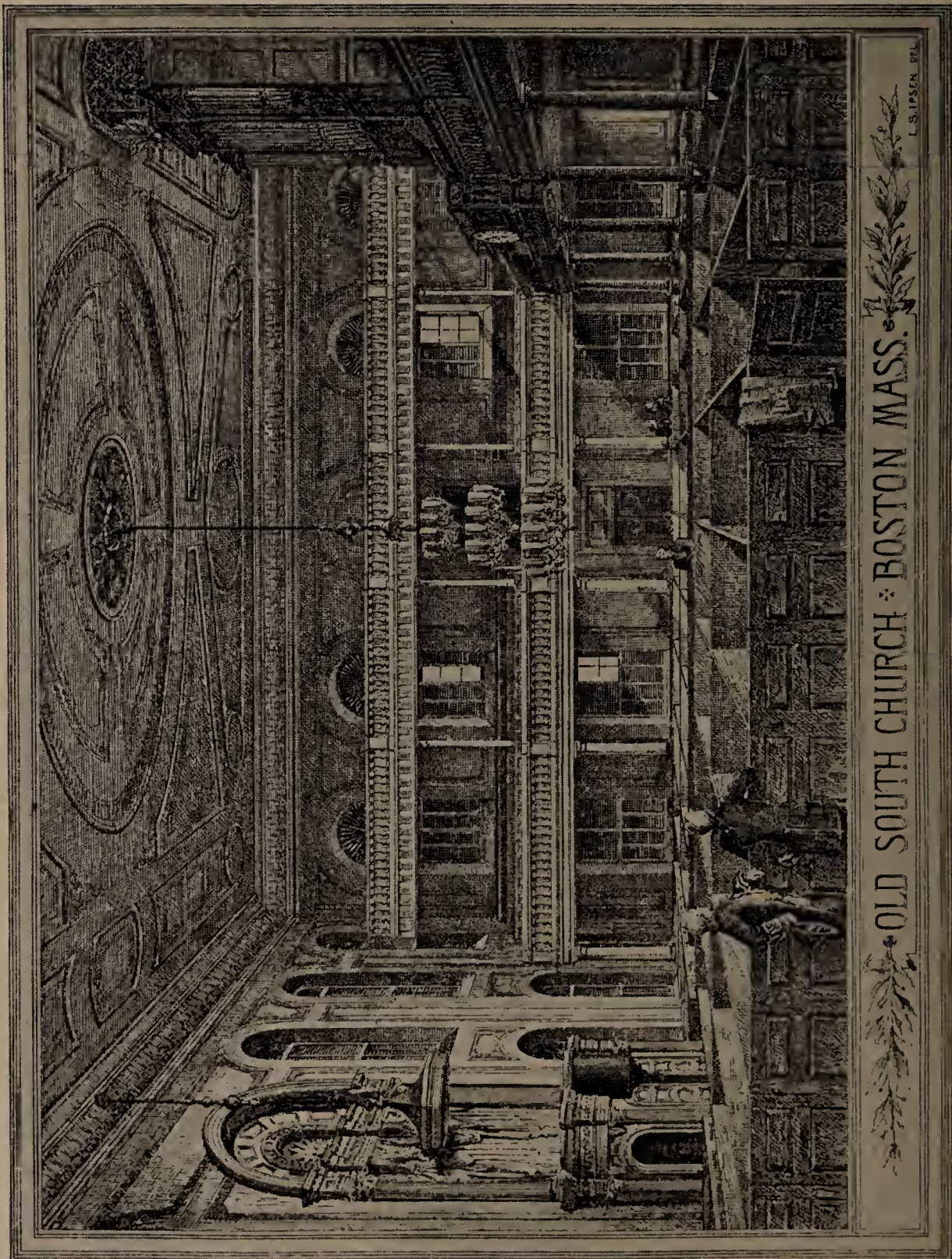
“Voted, that, The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. James Otis Esq. Mr. Samuel Adams Dr. Joseph Warren . . . Mr. Oliver Wendell . . . Josiah Quincy Esq [and seventeen others] be and hereby are appointed a Committee for the purpose aforesaid, and that they be desired to Report to the Town as soon as may be— . . . Then the Meeting was dissolved.”

—Boston Town Records, 1770-1777, pp. 372, 373.

These proceedings, with the report of the Committee of Correspondence, in full, were printed in a pamphlet by order of the town and distributed to each town in the province, and wherever the Committee thought fit. The report was a careful statement of the whole argument against the American policy of the Government then in office. It covers nearly twenty-six pages in the town records and is well worth reading. It was this committee which Bancroft said “contained the whole Revolution.” Cf. Old South Leaflet No. 173.

<sup>1</sup> Faneuil Hall was very much smaller then than now. It was enlarged to its present dimensions in 1805.





The interior of the present meeting-house as it appeared after the alterations made in 1857, although with the exception of the pulpit, the narrow upper gallery, the organ, the decorations on the ceiling, etc., the drawing substantially represents the interior as it was from 1729 on. The figures in revolutionary costume are clearly out of place in an 1857 interior.



By the Town on the Conduct of the Committee of Correspondence; and that said Committee be annihilated—

Mr. Adams, the Moderator, then moved, that as the Conduct of the Committee of Correspondence for this Town, of which he had the Honor of being a Member, is now to be considered, another Moderator might be chosen *Pro Tempore*.

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. Thomas Cushing Esq was accordingly chosen Moderator during that Debate—

The Motion for Censuring & annihilating the Committee of Correspondence was considered & the Gentlemen in favor . . . patiently heard; but it being dark; and these declaring that they had farther to offer—

Voted, that [it] be referred to the Adjournment—Tuesday June 28. . . . The Motion for Censuring & Annihilating the Committee of Correspondence again Considered, & after long Debates the Question was accordingly put; which passed in the Negative by a great Majority—

It was then moved, that the following Vote be passed, Viz<sup>t</sup>. “That the Town bear open Testimony that they are abundantly satisfied of the upright Intentions, and much approve the honest Zeal of the Committee of Correspondence & desire that they would persevere with their usual Activity & Firmness, continuing stedfast in the Way of well Doing—And the Question being put, passed in the Affirmative by a *Vast Majority*.

The Committee on Ways & Means . . . acquaint the Town, that they had met, & had received very encouraging Accounts of the Readiness of their Sister Colonies to assist us; . . . adjourned. . . .

—*Boston Town Records, 1770-1777, pp. 521-523.*

#### DURING THE SIEGE OF BOSTON.

Soon after the battle of Lexington, in the spring of 1775, the gates of Boston were shut, and all passing and repassing of citizens, between town and country prohibited, by the British commander. Mr. Hunt<sup>1</sup> was at that time on a visit at Brookline. Returning to Boston, he was not permitted to enter, unless he would pledge himself to remain. Not choosing to give this pledge, he retired to Northampton; where he died, . . . the following December, aged 31. During the occupancy of Boston by the British troops, the congregation was broken

<sup>1</sup> John Hunt, Pastor, Sept. 25, 1771, until his death, 1775.

up, most of its members having sought an asylum in different country towns. Their parsonage-house on Marlboro Street [now Washington],—formerly the mansion of Winthrop the first governor,—was demolished, and the materials used for fuel. Their Meeting House was turned into a riding-school for Burgoyne's regiment of cavalry. . . . Thus was the holy place profaned, until the British army evacuated Boston in March 1776.

—Wisner, *Four Sermons*, pp. 33-34.

#### TRUE TO REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES.

[On September 17th, 1830 were held, in the Old South, exercises commemorative of the founding of Boston two hundred years before, the Hon. Josiah Quincy delivering the oration. Exercises were also held in memory of James Monroe on Thursday, August 25, 1831. There was a Eulogy by the Hon. John Quincy Adams.]

[May 1st, 1861.] In this day of disaster and disruption, when national harmony is disturbed, when the beautiful order of the republic is broken up, and the dearest interests of ourselves and our posterity are in peril, the standing committee of the Old South Society, with the pastors and officers of the church, have deemed it eminently proper for them to unite with their fellow citizens, in expressions of loyalty to the government, in its efforts to restore order, peace and justice throughout the land. . . .

Thus true to the memories of the past, and devoted to the country, whose glory must not pass away, the Old South to-day gives our national flag to the breeze,—bearing upon it the motto, True to our Revolutionary principles,—and declares to the world that good men will cheerfully put themselves forward to protect it.<sup>1</sup>—Statement of the Standing Committee, in Hill, *Hist. Old South Church*, Vol. II. p. 513.

#### THE OLD SOUTH MEETING-HOUSE SAVED.

#### THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH BUILDING

All the materials above the level of the sidewalks, except the Corner Stone and the Clock in the Tower, of this ancient and historical landmark building, which has now come under the auctioneer's hammer, and will be disposed of

<sup>1</sup> The national flag waved from the steeple, May 1, 1861, and in August, 1862, a great public meeting was held in the yard of the Old South for the purpose of promoting enlistments in the Union Army. The bell was rung, there was a band of music in attendance, and the number of people was so large that traffic in the street had to be stopped. In eight weeks 1000 men volunteered and were examined in the porch of the Old South Meeting-house, the use of which had been given the authorities for recruiting purposes.



on Thursday, June 8, 1876, at 12 o'clock noon on the premises, on the corner of Washington and Milk streets.

The spire is covered with copper, and there is a lot of lead on roof and belfry, and the roof is covered with imported old Welch slate. 60 days will be allowed for the removal.

Terms cash.

—*Newspaper advertisement.*

Let these walls stand, if only to remind us that, in those days, Adams and Otis, advocates of the newest and extremest liberty, found their sturdiest allies in the pulpit. . . . The saving of this landmark is the best monument you can erect to the men of the Revolution.—Wendell Phillips, *Address in the Old South Meeting-house*, at a great mass meeting, held in the interest of preserving the building.<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. Edward Everett Hale had written to Mr. Longfellow: "You told me that if the spirit moved, you would try to sing us a song for the Old South Meeting-house. I have found such a charming story that I think it will really tempt you. I want at least to tell it to you. . . . The whole story of the fleet is in Hutchinson's Massachusetts, ii. 384, 385. The story of Prince and the prayer is in a tract in the College Library, which I will gladly send you, or Mr. Sibley will. I should think that the assembly in the meeting-house in the gale, and then the terror of the fleet when the gale struck them would make a ballad—if the spirit moved!"<sup>2</sup> This ancient building, with its historic memories, was in danger of being demolished.<sup>3</sup>

—Samuel Longfellow, editor, *Final Memorials of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, p. 256 note.

<sup>1</sup> This address is printed in Old South Leaflet No. 183, with full notes and other interesting matter by Mr. Edwin D. Mead relating to the wonderful and successful effort of that day to save the Old South from destruction.

The last religious service held in the meeting-house for a long period of years was on Sunday afternoon, November 9th, 1872, for the troops who had been called to guard the burnt district, during and after the great fire of that year.

<sup>2</sup> "A Ballad of the French Fleet" was the outcome of Dr. Hale's suggestion. To those who were present this ballad took on a new significance when in the course of his sermon in the Old South, August 4, 1907, the first religious service allowed to be held in the meeting-house for thirty years, Dr. Hale recited the entire poem. Then in his eighty-sixth year, he had long cherished the desire to outlive the terms of the restriction imposed with the sale of the property, and himself to conduct a service within its walls. Dr. Hale's sermon was from Haggai ii. 9. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts," the same text used by Joseph Sewall, when the meeting-house was first occupied, April 26, 1730 (O.S.).

Whittier in his "The Landmarks," and "In the 'Old South,'" Holmes in his "An Appeal for the 'Old South,'" James Freeman Clarke in his "The Old South Speaks," James Russell Lowell and Charles W. Eliot in notable addresses, with others, were also of great help in rousing public interest in the labors of the Committee on Preservation.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 28–30 of this leaflet.

The Standing Committee of the Old South Society held a special meeting this forenoon and voted to accept the offer of the Citizens' Committee of \$400,000 in cash for the Old South Meeting House. The offer was made on the 2nd day of September, after many consultations, and was suggested by the Standing Committee. They wished to insure the use of the building for historic and memorial purposes only, for all time, but were advised by ex-Judge Thomas that a restriction for thirty years would be more liable to hold in law, and today it was voted to accept the offer, with a restriction that it should be used for such purposes only and not be open upon Sunday. The restriction holds for thirty years, provided the building remains upon its present site. But if removed, no restriction attaches to either land or building.—*Boston Evening Transcript*, Friday, September 15, 1876.

The sale of the Old South Church was formally completed Thursday morning, for the sum of \$400,000. A city life insurance company [New England Mutual Life Insurance Co.] loans \$225,000 upon the property, taking a mortgage. Mrs. Hemenway advances on second mortgage the sum of \$100,000, and Mr. R. M. Pulsifer, the purchaser, pays \$75,000 in cash, making the amount of the purchase money. Mr. Pulsifer gives a bond to the committee of ladies to the effect that if they raise the money within a reasonable time he will give them a deed of the property.<sup>1</sup> The conditions of sale are as before stated—no religious services in the place for thirty years.

—*Boston Evening Transcript*, Friday, October 13, 1876.

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The story of the Old South Meeting-house outlined in this leaflet is an attempt to show its relation to the progress of freedom on these shores. It was not alone for "no taxation without representation" [or "consent"], that the men of the revolution contended; they strove to defend ancient privileges to which they believed themselves entitled, privileges which they had exercised from the days of settlement. They were for the right of liberty, the right to law, the right to labor and trade, the right to property, the right to bear arms, freedom of assembly and petition, freedom of speech, freedom of elections, and other of the great chartered rights of Englishmen. In the main, they had always governed them-

<sup>1</sup> Among the many notable meetings and entertainments for the benefit of the Old South Preservation Fund, was one especially remarkable, held in the meeting-house itself, May 4th, 1877. There was an introductory address by Governor Rice. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes recited "Old Ironsides," "The Old South," and "Dorothy Q.," Ralph Waldo Emerson read his "Concord Hymn" and "Boston Tea Party," Dr. James Freeman Clarke read his "The Old South's Plea," Mrs. Julia Ward Howe read "The Old South" and the "Centennial Hymn," and Dr. Samuel F. Smith read "America." John G. Whittier was to have read "Samuel Sewall's Prophecy," but was unable to attend. An elaborate "Old South Ball" was held in old Music Hall in March, 1877, and again in 1878, and there was a great fair in the meeting-house, in December, 1877, in which \$36,000 was netted for the preservation fund. Rev. Edward Everett Hale, Wendell Phillips, James Russell Lowell, Dr. William Everett, Colonel Henry Lee, Dr. Edward G. Porter, Dr. George E. Ellis, Rev. Henry W. Foote, and others delivered notable lectures from the Old South platform and here also in 1879 John Fiske gave one of his first courses of lectures on American history.



selves; the Parliament now sought to deprive them of that function. So it came about that in a congregation, itself organized as a protest against tyranny and exclusiveness, was found sympathy with every liberal aspiration of a determined people; so it was that under the roof of its meeting-house was found sanctuary for every assembly gathered in the interest of freedom.

The site of the meeting-house has been continuously occupied by a church-building for a longer time than any other ground in Boston. The lot was part of "the green," originally granted by "The Colony of the Massachusetts Bay in New England" to Governor John Winthrop and described by him as "the governour's first lot," (Winthrop, *Hist. N.E.*, 1853 ed., Vol. I. p. 383) and it so appears as "Lot A" in "Plans of Boston, showing existing Ways and Owners of Property" for 1630, compiled by George Lamb, Boston, 1905. Transfers were not required to be recorded until Oct. 19, 1652 (Colonial Records, III. 280), and apparently the first record of the land in question was Sept. 26, 1643, a mortgage by John Winthrop to William Tyng *et al.* (Suffolk Deeds, Lib. 1, p. 45 and Aspinwall Notarial Records, printed, Boston, 1903, p. 211). On Nov. 12, 1643, title passed to Stephen Winthrop and it was recorded Mar. 26, 1648 (Lib. 1, p. 102). The Spring Lane corner was set off Febr. 20, 1654 to Amos Richinson or Richardson (Lib. 3, p. 487a), and on Mar. 26, 1659, Judith Winthrop, widow of Stephen, conveyed all of the remainder to John Norton, the lot bounded "south by the highway to the seaside" (Lib. 3, pp. 257-262). Possession appears to have been given John Norton, July 26, 1659, and he, dying in 1663, devised his estate in Boston to his wife Mary Norton (Suffolk Probate Records No. 334). On April 1, 1669, Mary Norton executed a Deed of Gift to certain individuals, Thomas Savage *et al.*, their associates and successors, as the congregation of the Third or South Church (Lib. 6, fol. 26). Mrs. Norton also gave a deed dated June 30, 1677, of the land upon which her house, enlarged to be available for a parsonage, had been built, and this second deed was recorded Jan. 13, 1804 (Lib. 207, p. 241), the grantee being the South Church Congregation. Mrs. Norton knew she was helping a cause that would have found favor with her husband, the late Teacher of the First Church. She seems also to have felt that she was but giving the equivalent of what others had given in money. Hers was one of the sightliest estates in the town, at the corner of the "great way to Roxbury." Here, in the house that stood facing to the south, with the end toward School street, about where the main entrance to the adjoining office building now is, in the house which Mary Norton was devoting to the uses of the congregation, Winthrop himself probably lived from 1643 until his death. "It was of wood, two stories high, . . . and till the meeting-house was erected, [it was the only] building on the lot; . . . the premises gave the appearance indicated by the name, 'The Green,' being skirted along the main street by a row of beautiful buttonwood trees" (Wisner, "Four Sermons," pp. 34 and 54). These trees, with the house, furnished fuel for the British troops in the winter of 1775-6.

Once before, this lot had been offered for church purposes. In 1639 Winthrop was willing to give it to the First Church when the latter was about to build on a new place. The alternative was to take the land in Cornhill Court, about two minutes' walk less farther south. Among the advantages of this corner lot at that time were "1. First because it hath singular Accommodation to the Ayre, the want of [which hath made] burdensome the ordinances, to many (specially weake) hearers by faynting their spirits in the Summer time. . . This hath a farre greater advantage for the aire by reason of the sudden descents of the earth near to it, and it standeth open, ready to entertayne every breath of aire in the summer, . . . and the whole Towne breaketh the force of the cold northerly winds [in winter]" (Hill, *Hist. Old South*, I. p. 133, and original paper, Boston Public Library). But it was feared that to move the Church so far south would mean the "decay of the town's trading."

"The frame [of the first meeting-house of the South Church] being in place on the 1st of October help came in to raise it" ("Third Church Narrative" in Hill, I. p. 146), and on Dec. 19, 1669, it was first occupied. Of its appearance we know very little. "The House was built of cedar, with a steeple, galleries, square pews, and the pulpit in the side as in the present building (Wisner, p. 10 n.). In a declaration of trust, executed by Edward Rawson and others, it is recited that they and their associates built "a large spacious and faire meeting house, with three large porches, every way compleately fitted, and covered with sheete lead, the house and said porches, which stood them neere if not above two thousand pounds" (Hill, I. 274 n.). From the N.E. Weekly Journal of April 28, 1729, Miss Mary Farwell Ayer found that the first meeting-house "was near 75 foot long and near 51 wide; besides the Southern, Eastern, and Western porches, . . ." aside from the porches, only 20 feet less in length and 17 less in width than the present building. An interesting contribution on "The South Meeting-house, Boston," by Miss Ayer is contained in the N.E. Historical and Genealogical Register, July, 1905, and includes a reproduction of a section of Price's View of Boston, 1725. From a copy in the British Museum, in curious fashion, was brought to light a rough drawing of the roof and steeple of the cedar meeting-house. (Cf. illustration on p. 6 of this leaflet.) In 1721 it was voted to enlarge 21 feet on the north side but that was not done (Wisner, p. 26). On Febr. 27, 1727/8, it was voted to build a new house, and the old was demolished Mar. 3, and 4, 1728/9 (Cf. an account in Boston News Letter for Mar. 6, 1729, cited by Miss Ayer). The N.E. Weekly Journal, April 28, 1729, is also quoted. "On Monday, Mar. 31, the Stone Foundation of the South Church Brick began to be laid about 7 foot below the Pavement of the Street. And the Vault-Work being finished on Thursday



Morning last, April 24; the Frame of the Floor was laid above it, on the same Day. It lies nearly in the same place as the former." We can well understand the great attachment for the old building of older members like Judge Sewall who asked that his written protest be entered in the Church Records (*Cf.* Letter Book, II. pp. 233-4). There is a tradition that "the mortar was all made the fall before it was used" (Wisner, p. 26 *n.*). The stone at the south-west corner inscribed "N.E. [Newly Erected] Mar. 31, 1729," probably means that the foundation was begun on that date. "[The building] was finished with two galleries as at present; and the pulpit in the same position as now, but larger and higher than this, with a sounding-board projecting from the wall above the casing of the window; and with two seats directly in front, one somewhat elevated for the deacons, and one still more elevated for the elders. On each side of the middle aisle and nearest the pulpit, were a number of long seats for aged people: and the rest of the floor, except the aisles and several narrow passages, was covered with square pews. There were stairs or passages to the galleries inside the House, in the southwest and northwest corners; and the porch in Milk Street projected into the street about as far again as at present: the former were removed into the west porch in 1808, and the latter was reduced in 1813" (Wisner, p. 27). The new (present) meeting-house was first occupied on April 26, 1730 [O. S.].

In the "Steeple Chamber" Thomas Prince collected his "New-England Library." On shelves, and in boxes and barrels, in the room which had been Prince's study, the notable collection was left for many years without care. During the siege idle and pilfering hands were doubtless laid upon it. No doubt, also, many of the books were used by the king's soldiers to kindle fires in the riding-school here. But some of the most valuable of the treasures seem to have been preserved almost miraculously, the Bradford MS. "History of Plimouth Plantation," for instance. See the full account of Prince's library in the catalogue published by the Boston Public Library, which is now entrusted with the collection.

As a riding-school for Burgoyne's cavalry, the pulpit and pews, and all the inside structures were taken out and burnt for fuel, except the sounding-board and east galleries. The latter were left for the accommodation of spectators; and in the first gallery a place was fitted up where refreshments were furnished to those who came to witness the feats of horsemanship here exhibited. Many hundred loads of dirt and gravel were carted in, and spread upon the floor. The south door was closed; and a bar was fixed, extending from the wall on the west side of the first window west from the Milk street door, about ten feet long and four feet from the floor. Over this the cavalry were taught to leap their horses at full speed. (From Wisner's notes.)

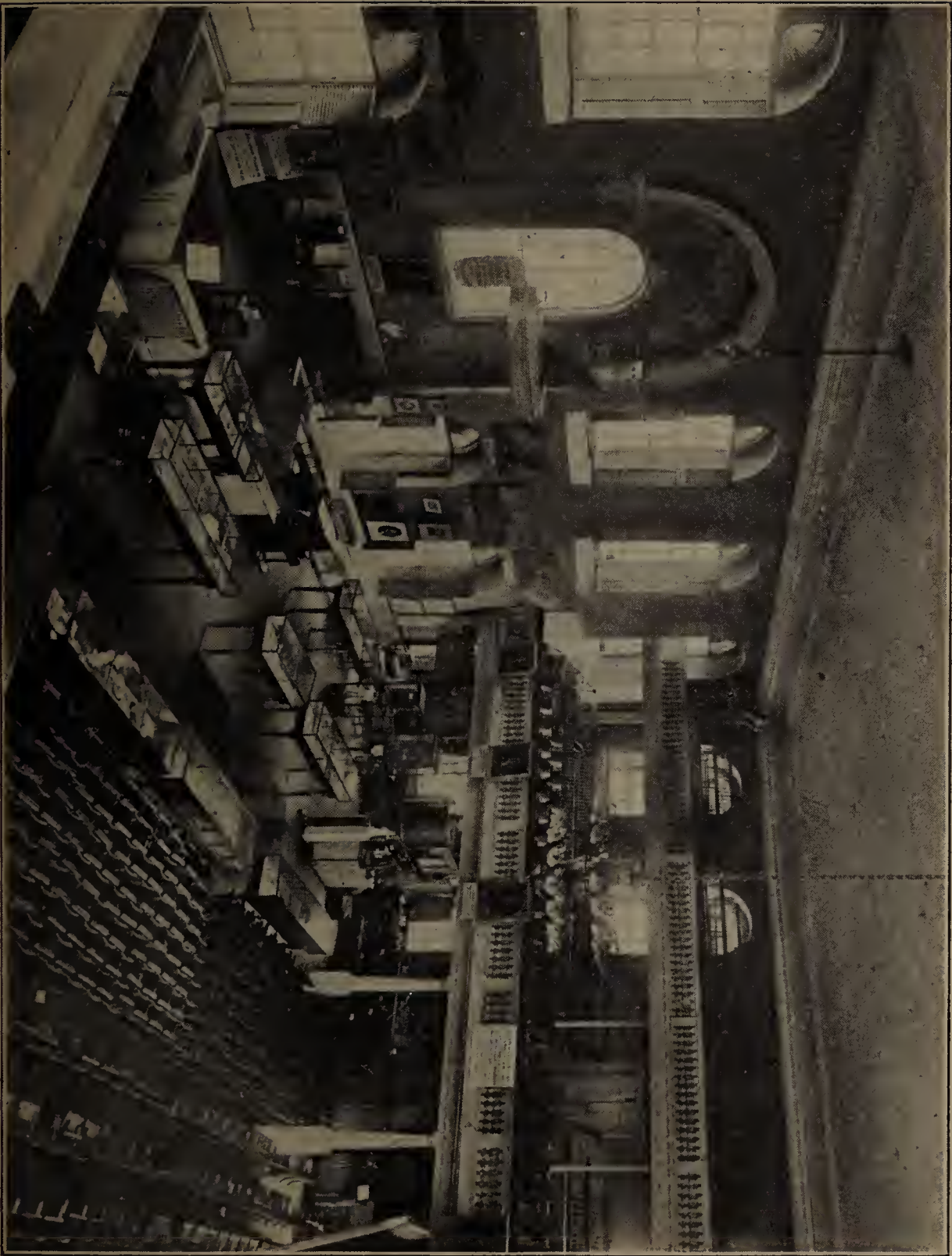
The interior was restored in the early part of 1783 in the same general style as of fifty years ago, except the pulpit, the form as well as the substance of which had then been changed. The original was what was commonly called "a tub pulpit." The one later in use, and the "wine-glass" portion of which is now on exhibition, was built in 1808, by Deacon William Phillips, at an expense of \$400. In 1814 the meeting-house was painted on the outside for the first time, the brick walls having previously been left in their original color. In 1824, the building was newly glazed, with new window sashes, &c., and furnaces were put in. An organ was brought from London in 1822 at an original cost in London of £1000. In 1857, the upper galleries were made less wide, the ceiling was decorated, and the pulpit lowered and considerably changed. With the exception of the "wine-glass" portion, the pulpit was now entirely new.

A chapter could be written of the contentions over pews, of the deference paid not only "to age and official standing, but to social and family distinctions," in marked contrast with the "rude political equality" of the townmeeting; of the placing of youth and children and sometimes women in the gallery, and of "blacks" in the upper gallery. "At a meeting of the South Church in their Brick Meeting House, Augt. 5, 1730. Voted that the deacons be desir'd to procure some suitable person to take the oversight of the children and servants in the galleries, and take care that good order be maintained in time of divine worship; and that a sufficient reward be allow'd for the encouragt. of such a person." (Third Church Records.)

In the chapel of the "Old South," on Spring lane, was organized the first Young Men's Christian Association in the United States, Dec. 29, 1851.

At length, the building having been somewhat damaged in the fire of 1872, and other circumstances having arisen, the congregation decided to worship elsewhere and in a new meeting-house. The property of the New Old South on Boylston and Dartmouth streets was first occupied in 1874. The old building was leased to the United States for post-office purposes for two years from December, 1872. Then came the thrilling campaign for its preservation. In the spring of 1876 the church was advertised for sale. Protests came from all over the country; but the effort to preserve the building was unorganized, and on June 8 it was sold at auction for \$1,350, to be removed within sixty days. The work of destruction at once began. The clock had been taken from the tower, and the solid masonry had been attacked, when a prominent Boston business house, George W. Simmons & Son, stepped in and bought the right to hold the building uninjured for seven days. June 14 fell in the middle of that period; and the meeting in the Old South on that day was one of the most remarkable ever held within its walls. The Meeting-house was crowded, Wendell Phillips and others making notable speeches. Months of strenuous effort followed, and public interest was roused. The price of the land on which the Old South stood was \$400,000. It was finally the women of Boston and New England who saved the old meeting-house.





The Interior of the Meeting-house as it is To-day.

Mrs. Mary Hemenway's gift of \$100,000 was the decisive act. An equal sum was made up by the contributions of hundreds of generous givers, and by this payment at the time of half the price the Old South was saved.

The meeting-house now contains an historical museum, and is the head-quarters of the Old South Work in History. At stated times it is opened for lectures to teachers, school children, and others, and in every way it is sought to make of it such a centre of inspiration as a "Sanctuary of Freedom" should be.

The one comprehensive work on the meeting-house is the History of the Old South Church, Boston 1669-1884 by Hamilton Andrews Hill in two volumes, Boston, 1890, which reference has been made. Mr. Hill has woven into his narrative the more significant records and documents of the church. There is also the pamphlet "History of the Old South Church" on sale at the Meeting-house, another by Everett W. Burdett, published in 1877, and various papers and publications mentioned in this present leaflet, not to exclude the valuable edition of Rev. Benjamin B. Wisner's "Four Sermons," 122 pp., Boston, 1830. A very interesting account of the efforts in the early 1870's of a part of the Old South Society to continue worshipping in the old meeting-house, by George A. Goddard Esq., is to be found in two numbers of "The Trust Fund," a periodical published by real estate and banking interests in 1876.

BOSTON, 1st July, 1910.

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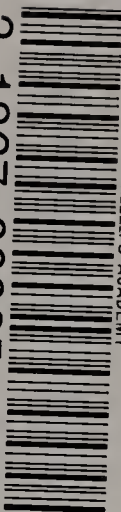
Old South Meeting-house, Boston, Mass.



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